

Digital Video Editing with Windows MovieMaker

Welcome to the exciting world of Digital Video! Editing video has traditionally required a lot of expensive, powerful equipment but thanks to the introduction of *digital* video over the past few years, the process of shooting, editing and producing your own movies is simpler, cheaper and more accessible than ever. It is now easily achievable in the classroom using a piece of free software.

This guide will cover the following points:

- Importing video clips and photos from your digital camera
- Managing the captured video footage
- Trimming video clips
- Arranging clips on the timeline
- Adding audio
- Adding titles, captions and credits
- Exporting the final video

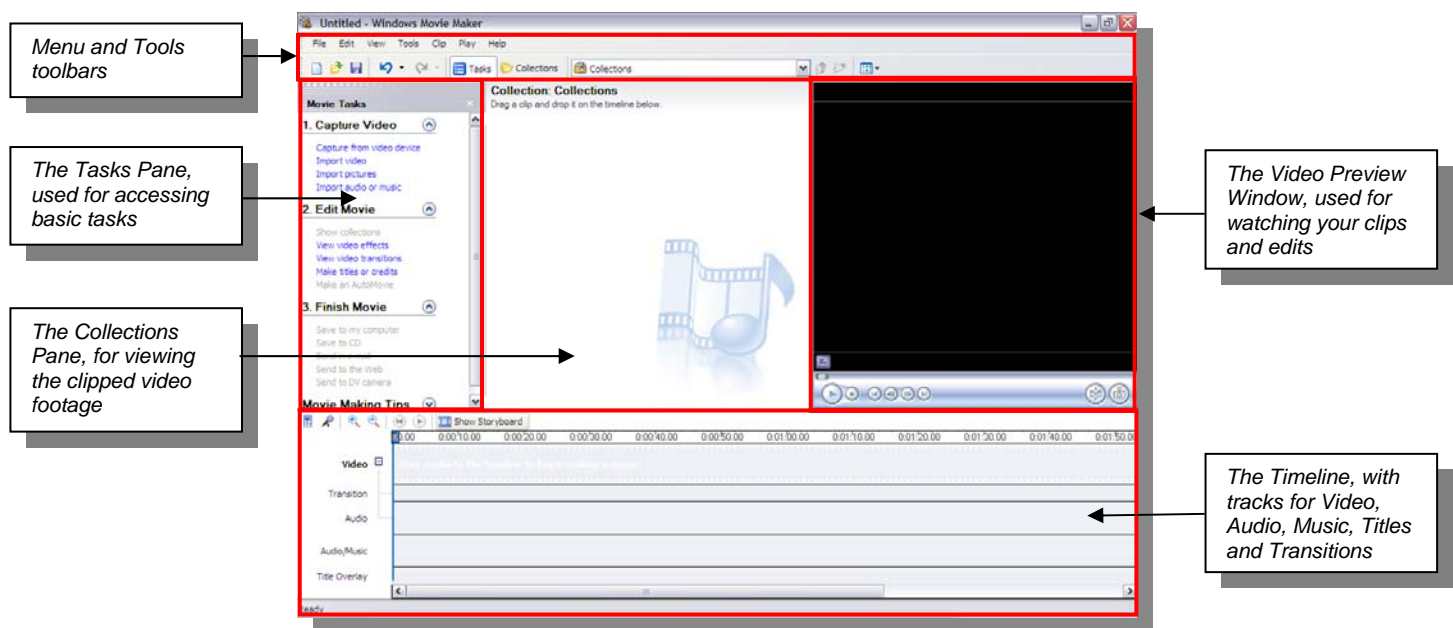
Introducing Windows MovieMaker

Windows MovieMaker, or WMM, is a basic video editing program included free with Windows XP. It lets you create, edit and save digital video files. To open WMM, click Start > All Programs > Accessories > Windows Movie Maker (This is generally where it is found, but it may be in a different place depending on your network). Because it comes standard with Windows XP it should be installed on computer in school, making it easy to try video editing as a class project.

Being a free, introductory level program, Movie Maker is a great starting point for learning most basic video editing functions.

The Windows MovieMaker interface

The main Movie Maker screen is divided into 5 main sections, as shown in this diagram...

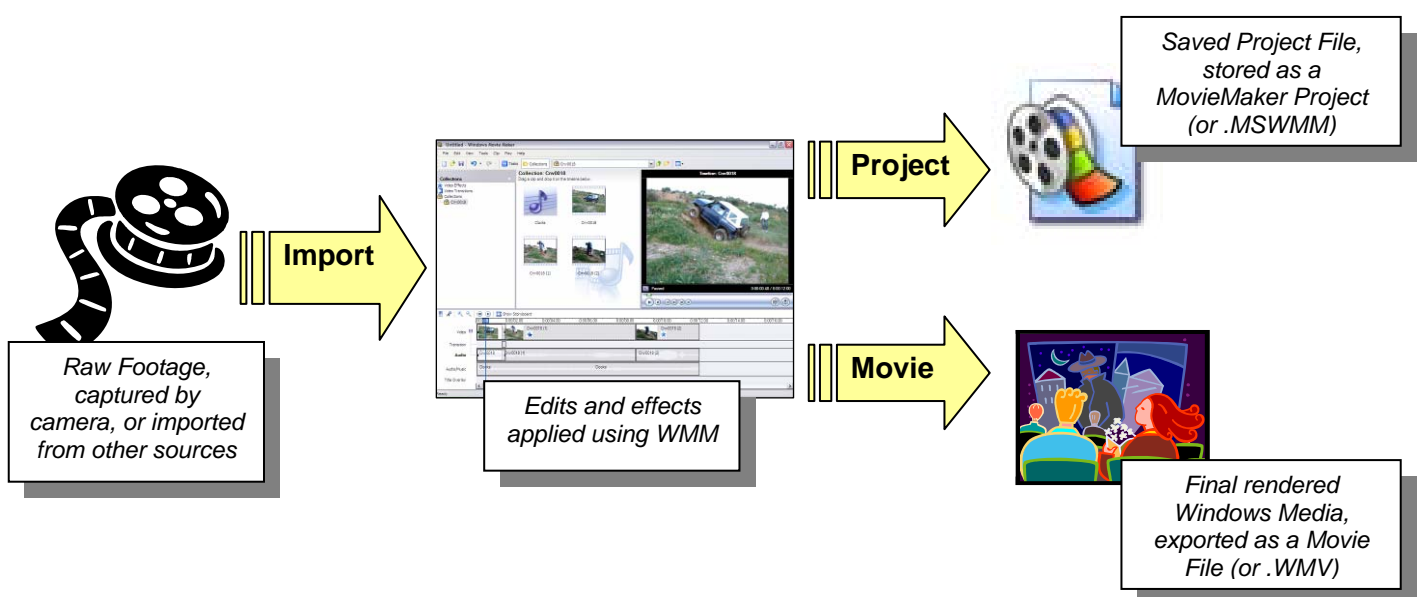


Developing a logical workflow

The basic process for working with video is ...

- Import resources like video, pictures and audio
- Edit the movie, applying effects, transitions and titles
- Finish the movie, by exporting it to an appropriate format

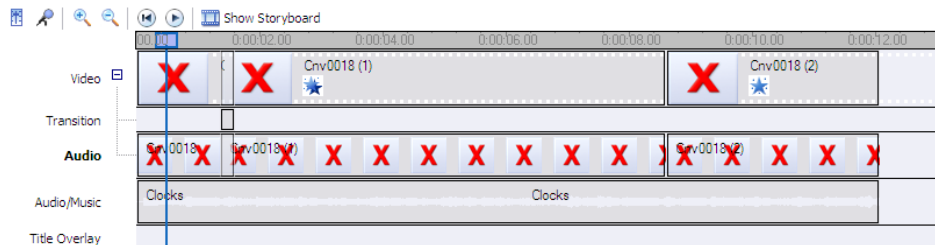
The **Task Pane** reflects this three-step process by dividing the editing process into these three stages. At its simplest level, creating movies is as easy as stepping through these stages from top to bottom.



The concept of Saving in Windows Movie Maker

It's important to realise that there are two options for saving in WMM – Save Project, and Save Movie File

File > Save Project will save the MovieMaker *working* file in .MSWMM format. This Project File contains the information about where the raw footage is located, what edits and transitions have been applied to it, timings, music volumes, etc. Project files are typically quite small, since they contain only information about the edits which are applied to the raw footage, and not the footage itself. Naturally, if you delete or move the raw footage then the Project file can no longer apply these changes to it, and you will see a lot of red X's where your clips and edits used to be. The rule is, don't move or delete the raw footage until you're certain you are finished with it!



File > Save Movie File will export the current project into a piece of *finished* video, using the Windows Media Video format, or .WMV. WMV files are fully independent and don't require links back to the original raw footage, or the MovieMaker Project file. Video files are typically quite large, although the size will vary according to the length, quality and complexity of the footage.

Tip: a common mistake made by people new to MovieMaker is not fully understanding this dual saving concept. If you want to think of it like a Word document - when the document is on the screen in Word it is still fluid and editable. Saving it as an electronic Word document means you can come back and edit it again later, but once you print the document you take a fixed "snapshot" of the document's current state. This is similar to the concept of the Project File (like the Word document), and the Movie File (like the printout)

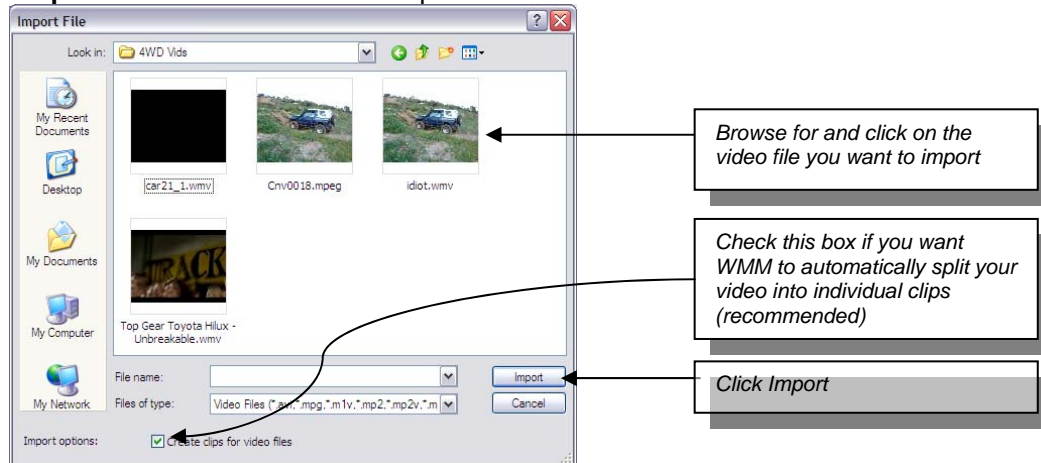
Importing Video

You can import existing video footage that you have stored as an existing video file. Movie Maker can import Windows Media files (.WMV), Compressed MPEG files (.MPG), and Interleaved audio/video files (.AVI), plus a few other Windows-friendly types. It cannot import Apple's Quicktime video format (.MOV).

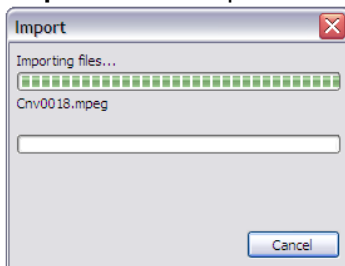
Video are often stored by default in the My Videos folder (in My Documents)

Step 1: In the task list, click **Import Video** to begin

Step 2: Choose the video file to import



Step 3: Video is imported



Step 4: The imported video clip(s) are added to the Collection list

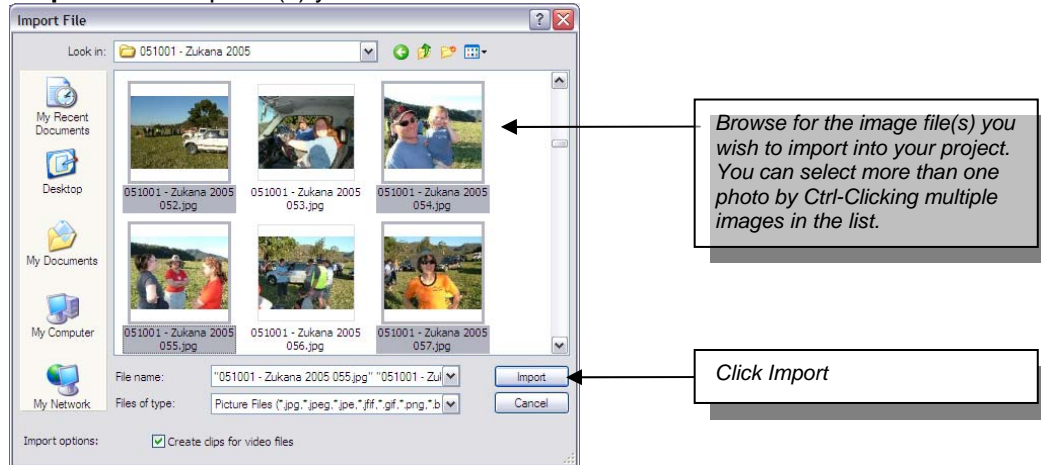


Importing Pictures

Importing still pictures, such as those from a digital still camera is also possible. These images will not be actual moving video footage of course, but they can still be inserted into your movie project very effectively as still images, creating a slideshow effect.

Step 1: From the Task list, choose **Import Picture**

Step 2: Find the photo(s) you want



Step 3: The selected pictures appear in the Collection list

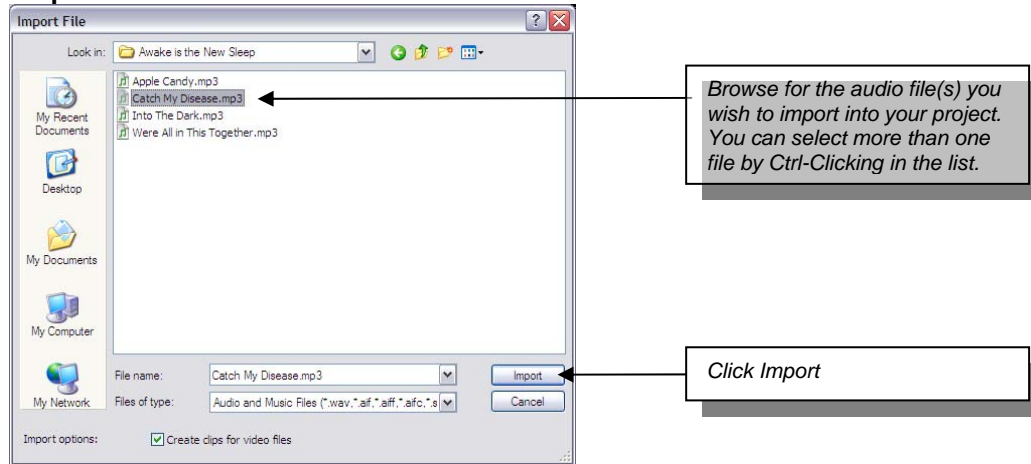


Importing Audio

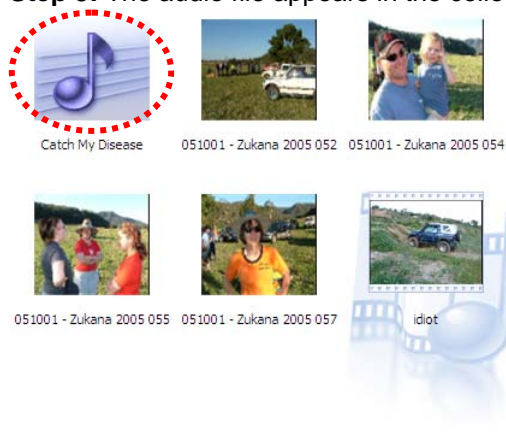
Importing audio for use in soundtracks or background music can be done in a similar manner. Windows Movie Maker will import audio in several common formats, including Windows Media (.WMA), WaveFile (.WAV), the popular MP3 format.

Step 1: From the Task list, select **Import Audio**

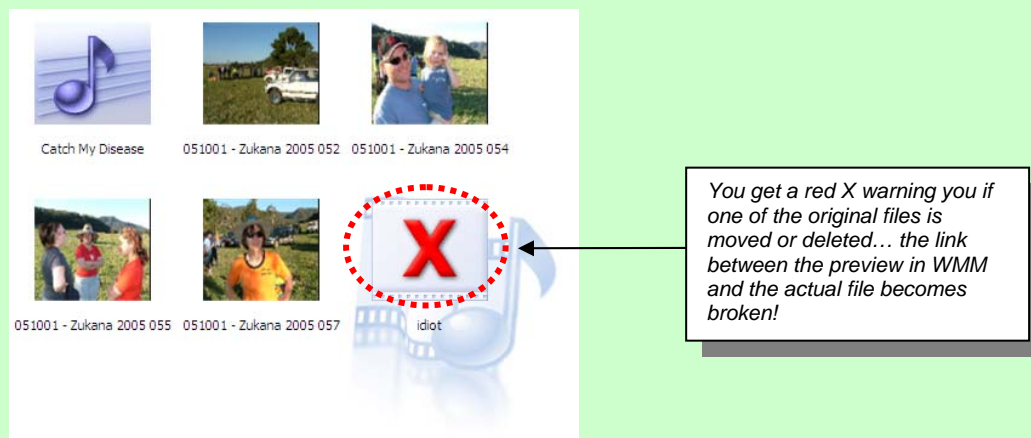
Step 2: Browse to the chosen audio file



Step 3: The audio file appears in the collection list



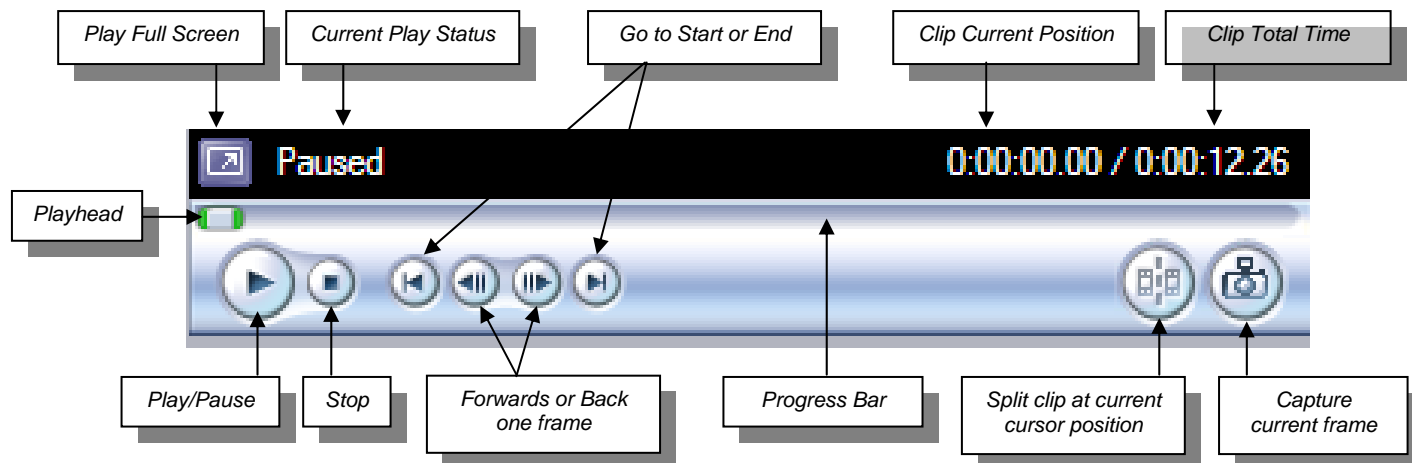
Tip: You can continue to add items to your collection list – video, audio and images – until you have collected all your resources together in one place. It is important to remember that these previews in the Collection list are simply **links back to the original files...** so even after you import your resources into Movie Maker, if you then move or delete the original files from the location from which they were imported, the links will break and the previews will display as a red X, indicating the original file is no longer available.



Previewing your Clips

You can preview your video clips by clicking once to select them, and they will appear in the large preview window on the right. Click the Play button to play the clip.

The transport bar below the movie preview has these buttons for controlling or interacting with the movie clips...




Splitting Clips

As you preview each clip in the preview window, it's a good idea to trim off the excess footage. You can do this by splitting each clip into sections, trimming away the parts that you don't need.

Step 1: Click on the clip you wish to trim.

Step 2: Press play to advance the clip to the point at which you wish to split it, then pause at that point. Alternatively, you can use the playhead to scrub through the footage to find the exact point to split at. Use the Forwards or Back one frame buttons to fine tune your split point. The keyboard spacebar can also be used to Play/Pause the video clip.

Step 3: With the clip preview paused at the selected frame, press the Split button, . (The keyboard shortcut is Ctrl-L)

Step 4: The Collection list now displays two clips in place of the original one. The first clip is the section before the split, the second is the section after the split. WMM adds a number in brackets to the clip name. You can split each section as many times as you wish.



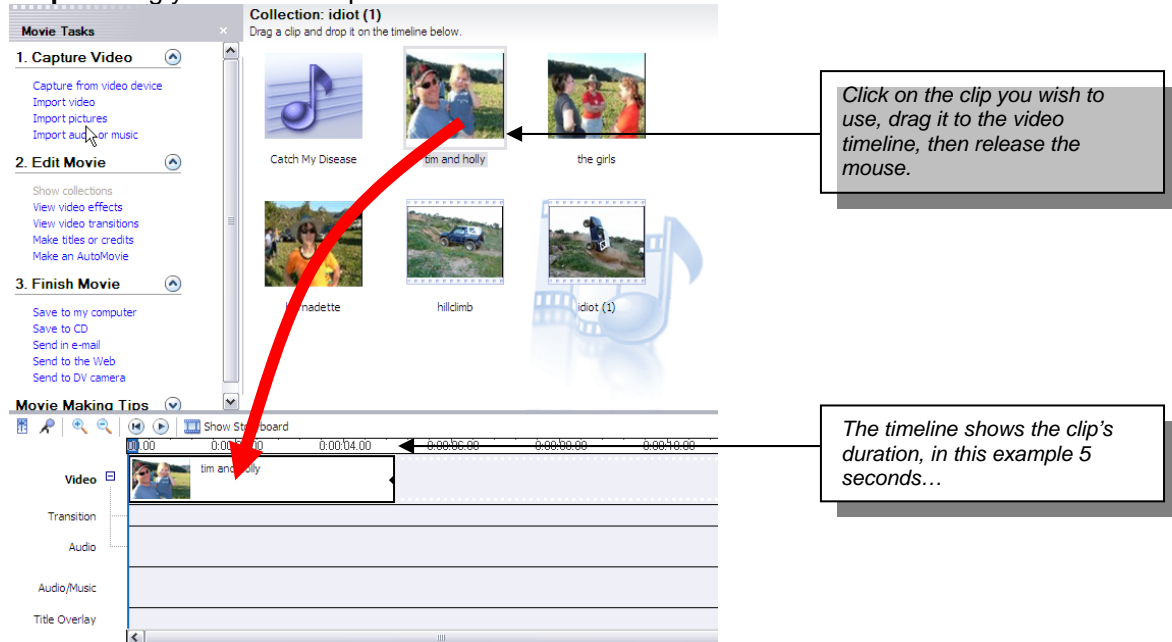
You can also rename your clips, to give them more meaningful names. Select the clip in the Collections pane, then click once more on its name. You can now type a name that makes more sense. You can also delete any unnecessary clips by selecting them and pressing the delete key on the keyboard. Note that deleting the clip has NO effect on the original raw footage.

Adding clips, images and audio to the Timeline

OK, we've managed to gather our resources and even make a few modifications like splitting and renaming the clips. Now what?

The next task is to place the clip resources onto the Timeline in the order in which you wish them to play.

Step 1: Drag your chosen clip resource to the timeline



Step 2 (optional): Scale the Timeline

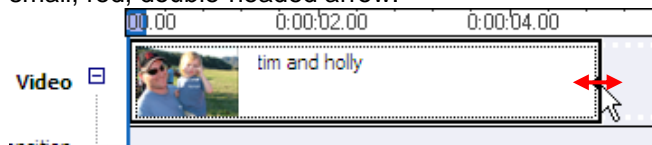
Depending on the current scale of the Timeline, you may wish to enlarge or reduce the timeline to a more appropriate scale. You can do this by clicking the + or – icons above the timeline.



Step 3 (optional): Resize the length of the clip or split it.

Although you may have already split clips earlier, there may still be times when you wish to adjust the length of a particular clip. Especially in the case of still images, because they have no "length" as such, Movie Maker imports them with a default display time of 5 seconds.

To resize the clip on the Timeline, place your cursor over the right hand edge of the clip and you will see a small, red, double-headed arrow.



Click and drag to the left to make the clip shorter. Drag to the right to make it longer.

You can also 'split' movie clips at this point – allowing you to delete the section you don't want to use (pause the clip in the appropriate place then select 'clip – split' from the menu bar).

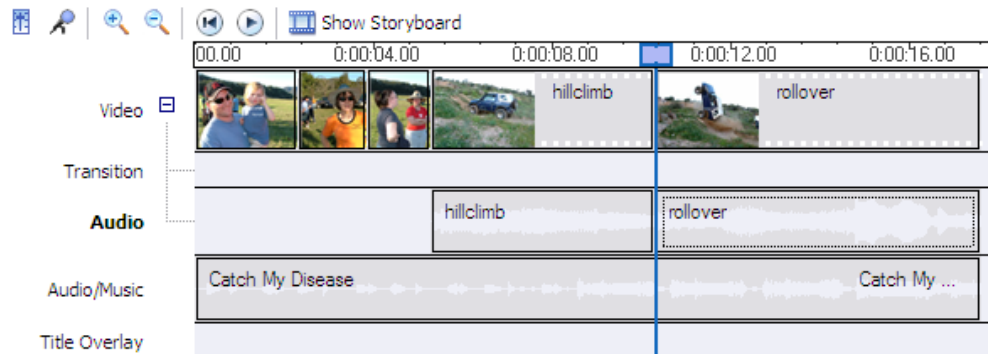
Tip: Dragging to the right will only make a clip longer if it is a still image, since still images don't have a fixed length. However, dragging to the right on a piece of video footage has no effect since a piece of video cannot be made longer than it really is. The exception is that if you drag the edge of a video clip to the left to shorten it, you can always drag it back to the right to restore it to its original length. These time-edits are non-destructive of the original clip.

These basic resizing techniques work for video, stills and audio.

Adding more clips to the Timeline

That was easy, wasn't it? To add more clips, simply repeat the process, dragging your clip resources to the Timeline in the order you wish them to appear, while resizing any that might be too long or too short.

As you do this, your video starts to be assembled piece by piece. If you don't like the position a clip, just select it and press the delete key, then add it again in the correct place. (You can also drag them around on the Timeline, and release them where you'd rather they be placed)



In the above screen shot, notice that the video clips also have an audio track (recorded as part of the video), whereas the still images do not.

Also notice that the audio music file is placed on its own special Audio/Music track.

Watching your edited video

To see your masterpiece so far, use the Timeline transport buttons to **Rewind** your video to the beginning, and then click the **Play** button



The video previews in the main preview window.

You can also use the transport buttons in the main preview window. (You can even use the full-screen button to view your work as a full-screen preview if you wish)

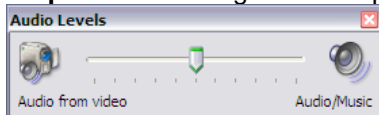
What if the audio or music is too loud?

Sometimes the balance of the audio from the video is too loud or too soft compared to the volume of the audio from the music track.

Step 1: To fix this, click the **Set Audio Levels** button above the Timeline.



Step 2: In the dialog box that appears, move the slider to the left or right depending on your preference.



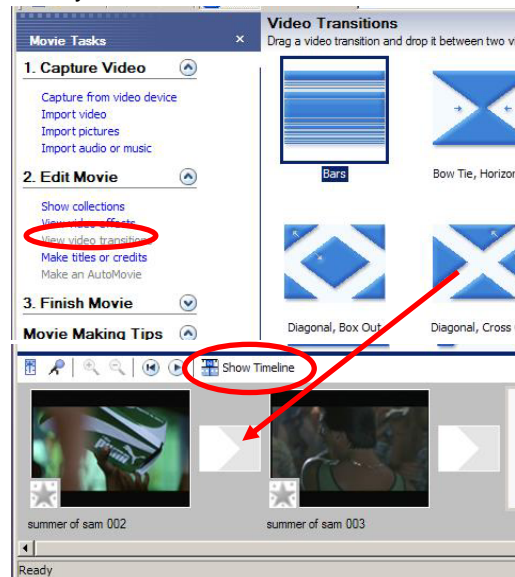
Step 3: Close the **Audio Levels** dialog. The audio balance should now be adjusted. You can adjust this as many times as you like.

Adding Transitions

You can add various 'transition' effects to control what happens between one video clip / picture and the next. There are many effects that can be chosen including crossfades, swipes, dissolves and shaped reveals. The best thing to do is experiment with them and see what you like.

Make sure you are in 'storyboard view' (A button above the clips toggles between show storyboard and show timeline')

Select 'show video transitions' under the 'edit movie' menu. Drag and drop the transition of your choice into the small rectangle between your two clips.



Adding Titles, credits and captions

1. Click on **make titles or credits**.

2. It then gives you options such as:

At beginning of Movie

Before a clip

On a clip

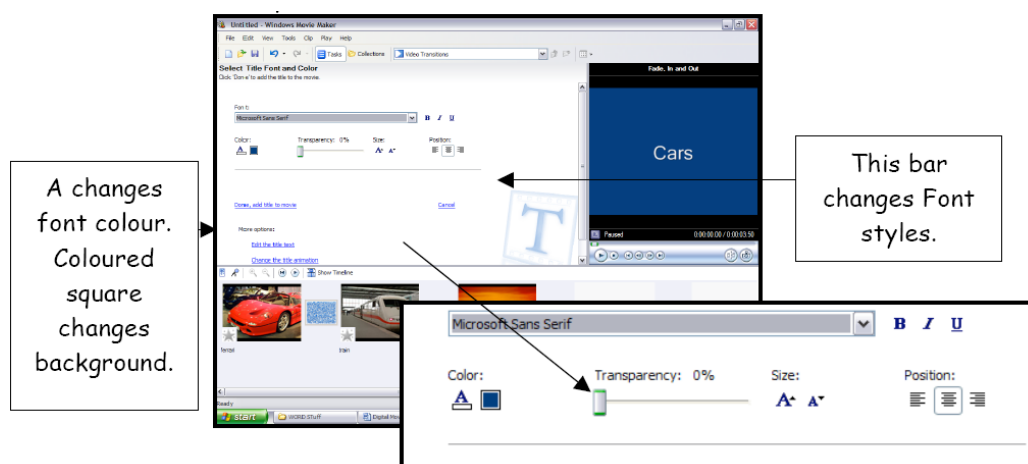
After a clip

At the end of the movie

3. Make a title at beginning of movie. Type in your Title, and then choose **text font and colour**. There you can change background colour, Text font and font style.

4. If you click on **change title animation**. Here you can choose the way the title comes onto the screen.

Follow the same process for creating credits or adding captions on to a clip.



Exporting your finished movie

When you have finished you need to export it so that it can be viewed by others.

Select: File > Save movie file

The 'Save Movie Wizard' will then pop up. Follow through the steps pressing the 'next' button and adding information where necessary;

Movie location – my computer

Saved movie file – enter a filename and select a location

Movie setting – best quality

The wizard will then create your movie by rendering together the video, audio and transitions and will produce a movie file. This may take a few minutes depending on the complexity and length of your movie.

The finished file will be in windows media (.wmv) format and should be viewable on most computers.